



**KORRUPT
YR SELF #7**

Welcome to the Inside Cover of Korrupt Yr Self Issue #7

The writing for this zine was begun in March of 2013. It was finished sometime around June of 2013 at which point it was given to Billy the Bunny for content and grammatical editing. It was then sat on for months until October when some of it was extracted and turned into KYS #6.5. The final editing, layout and (hopefully) printing was done in November of 2013.

Back issues are available by emailing me at goodgovernor@yahoo.com. I think I have copies of issue #1, #3-#6 and a few of #6.5. I also have a book of short stories called *Cutting Teeth* that I published like two years ago. You can get that shit by emailing me too. We'll work something out. I am working on a zine called *Meredith*. I have also started issue #8 of KYS which I hope is going to be about skateboarding. There is at least one story about skateboarding written so far. I have an old blog at korruptyrself.wordpress.com that will provide you access to digital copies of this zine and past issues.

The cover photo is of interview subject Adrian Toto's crotch at the last Fort Hobo show. Andy Lyman guest stars. The back photo is of the band Music is the Enemy. All the photos are by me. Unless they aren't. All other stuff was stolen or borrowed and probably not credited because who gives a shit about zines. Use any of this zine in anyway you see fit, except to get into college or credit as your own. Copy and spread widely. Listen to music, drink coffee, try to self analyze and see where you could be a better person. I've been struggling with that lately. There's a lot going on in my life. It's been weird and difficult. I'm trying to be the person I like right now. Be good to yourself and to others. Enjoy coffee or tea. I'm not a fascist here. I like both. Try to think about what you've been taught that might not be awesome. Try not to oppress anyone or be a dick. But also love yourself and give your self room for error and all that stuff. The world is a tough place. Listen to music. Whatever gets you through the day. Thanks for reading. Erik.

Hang the DJ

for Sarah Moskowitz

It's 2:47 PM, Thursday morning, March 28th. I am typing this in the dark. I should be exhausted and asleep, but I am not. How could I be? I've just returned from listening to nearly three hours of non-stop, head banging, skateboard thrashing, ear splitting, mind melting, skull raking metal music. I am 35 years old. This should probably be considered a mental disorder. But I do it nearly every week. I volunteer for it, even.

Tombstone rock is now in its 21st year(?) of existence on 89.9 KUNM, public radio station for Albuquerque and most of New Mexico. I don't know most of the history for the show or the station. Sometimes I am astonished at how a show focused on playing mostly underground heavy metal music can even exist, but then I look back on my two and half years living in this lost desert city, amongst its sun burnt residents, high meth usage, poor public transportation and deplorable education system, and just kind of shrug it off. Greg, the actual host of the show, may or may not know all of it's history. I have asked on occasion, but considering he has a day job, a wife, a band, and a good intake of vegan food and other awesome things, history lessons are not his top priority. It's far too fun being a radio DJ in this context. I play metal music, late at night, once a week in the middle of fucking nowhere.

Like any music nerd, who at 35 finds themselves on the airwaves, this is somewhat of a dream come true. As a child I was fascinated by the radio. It was a magical device that brought magical sounds into my world and it was transportable, at least by car and then later a boom box. My parents both listened to the radio every time we got in the car. For many of those years they didn't have tape or CD players either, so it was always the radio. My dad mostly listened to the drab country music of the eighties, filled with overproduced acoustic guitars and drum tracks so sterile you could actually see a reflection in the sound waves despite what modern physics would have you believe. There is a special hatred in my being for Randy Travis, The Judds, and others of that ilk whose music I hope burns in hell forever. My mother was a bit more lax with the dial and I caught early glimpses of New Order, Depeche Mode, and other weird shit that was going on in the 80's. The 80's of course was, and always will be the best time for radio, because music was changing so rapidly and you could still hear David Bowie when he was still cool and relevant. Not that I knew. Music was so mystical back then not yet a commodity for me, because I only found it on the radio. I was addicted to Casey Kasum's Top 40 countdown. I'm pretty sure it aired on Sunday mornings because it couldn't have competed with my Saturday Morning TV addiction, another beautiful aspect of growing up in the 80s. I didn't know how the hell singles moved up and down the charts, and often disagreed with Kasum about what the #1 single would or should be, especially if my favorite song at the time got knocked out of the top spot because if it fell to like three or four then you didn't get to hear it played all the way through. I would carry that damn boom box all over the house, doing chores or washing cars, or helping dad in the garage. If I ever had to miss it, I hated life. Radio was my salvation, my first

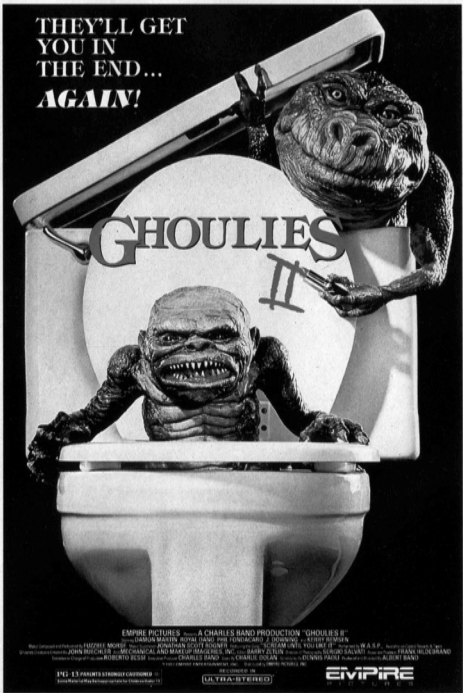
religion.



Heavy Metal was the first type of music that I felt I had ownership of. The years 1987 and 1988 would prove pivotal in that development. Prior to Guns and Roses blowing up the world with *Appetite for Destruction*, heavy metal music was a forbidden mystery to me. My father owned and operated his own shoe and boot repair and sales store in Placerville, California. The second location of Gold Country Bootery was in a shopping strip that featured a video store (also a source of my development, one of the owners would often let me watch horror movies to my heart's

content) a Carl's Jr., and a record store. Those were my three stops when I would spend the day with Dad. I would spend HOURS in the record store, flipping through vinyl records. Covers for King Diamond, WASP, Slayer, Black Flag, Overkill and Ozzy Osborn albums, among many others, would fascinate the shit out of me. But, I knew better than to even try to get cassette tapes past my mom. Sure, I had some Run DMC and Beastie Boys at home, a little Bon Jovi maybe. But that was tame by comparison to what heavy metal showed me. They were actually a musical reflection of the horror movies I watched, mostly in secret from my parents. I would out Toxic Avenger or Chainsaw Massacre II (I liked the more campy movies, the "scary" ones kind of boring) and then down to the record store stare at the cover for *Hell* was terrifying, truly, unlike horror movies I watched, these icons of evil, fear darkness. But I wanted Badly.

Those worlds of film and collided one day. In 1987 watch *Ghoulies 2* and I got to hear WASP. It was intense and evil than I imagined. I tried to buy their tapes, but I am sure the shop owner, the a classmate and rumored addict/dealer, somehow



check Texas always horror were kick it and *Awaits*. It the to see and in.

metal I would finally more had one of pretty father of coke teamed

up with my mom and talked me out of it. I bought AC/DC's *74 Jailbreak* instead, a tape I would later trade for Dokken's *Back for the Attack*, the band's "Dream Warriors" being the title song for *A Nightmare on Elm Street 3: Dream Warriors*. This is all an aside, because at this point I was buying tapes, though still not always the ones I really wanted. I had entered the world of metal, but still the demonic, the satanic, the truly evil, was off limits, both practically and spiritually. I WAS terrified of Slayer and King Diamond. Ozzy Osbourne was creepy as shit and gave me nightmares, his covers of *Bark at the Moon* and *Diary of a Madman* were intense to me then.

As I grew older and gained more autonomy, my life as a metal head became more robust. By 1988 I wore my Metallica *...And Justice For All* t-shirt almost daily, hung out with my friend Tom, where we pretended to start our own bands, and listened to his sisters tapes when she was away from the house. Metal became something besides music to me, it became my identity. At 12 it was an identity that was acceptable because my world was still small, and only extended to the edge of the playground. Differences between my peers and I were emerging, the mutation into cliques and social circles beginning to take shape, but at 12, at least then, us kids were still kids, there was an innocence that would soon be lost. During this time, my parents and I moved from the West to the East coast. My metal identity would soon be my solace in a strange, new place called Virginia.

I left a small, nearly all white, mostly middle/working class community and became a part of a much larger, more culturally and economically diverse world. Hip-Hop culture and rap music was the identity of cool in this new town, and it was a culture I knew nothing about. Too young to understand the racial and class implications of this and the commodification of a culture my white counterparts seemed all too easily to adopt, I clung, somewhat foolishly to heavy metal. Iron Maiden, Anthrax, Metallica, as well as some of the radio rock like Skid Row and Aerosmith, were my solace in a strange, new world. The new culture, called "black" or "urban" or the politically correct "African-American," was threatening to me. It was not like the television shows that I loved as a kid. Again the racial stereotypes of fun-loving, city dwelling, black youths were not quite apparent to me. Hip-Hop, as I would learn to associate this new world with was hostile to a young wanna be heshier. It was about style, attitude, movement, color and celebration. It was also about an outward rebellion. Where Heavy Metal is often concerned with the inner turmoil and horror, Hip-Hop dealt with a true world of evil, with actual devils in suits, in charge of gentrification, discrimination and racism as a result of historical oppression that was so much larger and more complex than fear of death and songs about comic book characters. Death metal soon emerged as a popular form of heavy metal in the early nineties and I would quickly use it to replace classic metal which would then be replaced by punk, pop and indie in the coming years. I dabbled for about a year in Decide, Obituary, Morbid Angel and Death. I was in Norway, coincidentally when Varg Vikernes of Burzum was burning churches and killing Euronymous, but even by then my interest in metal and identifying with metal was waning. This largely has to do with girls and wanting to get their attention and metal was NOT cool. There were no metal girls to be seen in my suburban hell. By 1991 Perry Farrell had birthed his Lollapalooza touring festival on the world and inaugurated me to one Henry Rollins, singer of Black Flag, whose tattoos and sweat drenched pictures

were powerful and real, especially in comparison to the long hair, skinny jeans and seemingly clownish dudes that made up metal. A chance day at a Waxie Maxies found me buying Black Flag's *The First Four Years* on tape and ultimately alienating my friends Keith and Ben who didn't understand it. By now my identity was against me, already being alienated as we entered high school, so why not go for broke and immerse myself in the most alienating music I could find. I found some punk kids, mostly young women who felt alienated like I did and also influenced my tastes greatly.

Years later, as music became more complex, genres mixed and being cool and fitting in were lost causes, I rediscovered my love for metal. Virginia grindcore heroes Pig Destroyer, who were this combination of brutalizing punk and skilled heavy metal brought me back into the fold. I can not stress how important it was to hear this band on one mundane day working in a Moto Photo. One of my co-workers brought in the newly mastered *Explosions in Ward Six* and I realized this was the music I was missing. He let me have the tape, mostly out of confused joy I think, and I played it non-stop until the CD came out a month or two later. This album did for me what Death Metal initially did, it recharged me and scared the shit out of me. How could a band be so loud, so powerful, so terrifying and so violent in such short bursts? The wankery and ego of the guitar solo was gone but clearly Scott Hull was a proficient axe-man. J.R. Hayes' vocals teetered on the brink of insanity, a kind of lulled craziness, unlike my favorite vocalist at the time David Yow who sang like a drunken street urchin. Hayes on the other hand was calm and calculated in his vicious anger. The words shouted at precision before the hammer hit the skull. Brian Harvey killed it with a drum track that was vicious and tech heavy without the use of bullshit drum triggers. Yeah, I was hooked again on the alienation, violence and horror that metal had to offer. I struggled of course with its misogyny and violence towards women, it was yet another awakening that has made my relationship not just with metal, but punk and hip-hop and other genres of music, difficult. Society, though, is complicated and difficult to interact with.

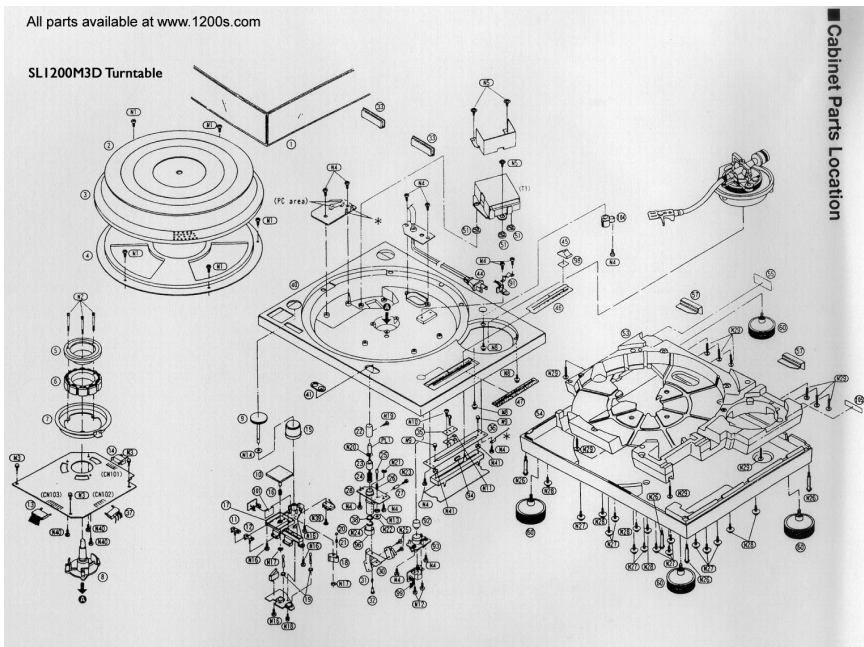
When I moved to Albuquerque from the suburbs of Washington DC I was 33, it was winter, I didn't have a job or, once again, a clue. Eventually I met Greg, and after a few interactions learned he hosted a show on KUNM. One day, ever interested in radio, I asked if I could come up sometime for the broadcast.

The control room of the station was the cave of solace I looked for all my life. Finally, I could sit in quiet, an amazing sound system that broadcast outwards across 181.3 square miles, playing anything I wanted thanks to lax rules about overnight broadcasts. I couldn't say "fuck" on the air, but I could spread the venom of metal. I could play Venom on the air! And others would hear it. This place was built for me. I sat down and watched Greg intently. I listened as he played so many new bands from Black Metal, Death Metal, Speed Metal, Thrash, Grind, Powerviolence. Tombstone indeed! Newly 35 I had an awakening. I vowed to return, Greg even eventually promising I could make my own play list.

Since then, I've called myself an intern. I show up when I can and have been given an hour of programming each week. I am trying to catch up on decades of music and learn what it really means to be a genre DJ. It's a lost art and not an easy task. My playlists are growing in variety, not just of music types but of the

bands themselves. I am only now really hearing decades of death and black metal from European countries outside Scandinavia, and my growth, love and appreciation of grind has grown tenfold since that fateful day in May of 2012. I've also revisited some of my favorites like Testament and Exodus and discovered the originators like Bathory and Voivod. And, because the metal community is so competitive, filled with ego and divided like a high school lunchroom, I make sure to try and include all genres. New Mexico likes it's Death Metal, but that doesn't stop me from playing DC doom legends, silly thrash bands or whatever I think should be included in the realms of a show called Tombstone. Punk, hardcore, crust, anarcho-leftists, far too much Darkthrone and even the occasional post-punk jam, I try to get it all in there. As I keep going further, I try to intake from Greg as much as possible. It's sometimes so vast, and considering the hour of the day, hard to pay attention. But it's a learning experience. I have learned I am no expert in metal.

The lack of sleep due to the odd hours, the darkness and solitude make being an overnight DJ a little more appealing than doing it during the day. Much like writing, DJing is a solitary experience, and even though me and Greg are friends and see each other outside the control room, many of the nights we spend are in silence, listening to the music, only occasionally talking over the three hours. In all my years I have never shared the experience of listening to music with someone like I have



Greg, and yet we have enough respect for each other's vibe to know when to thrash and socialize in the studio and know that it's going to be a night of listening. In its way, this makes Greg the perfect teacher. He answers all questions with a great knowledge, shares new finds excitedly and basks in the humor of metal I try to interject. He is generally a much less antagonistic DJ than I am with his selections. But not that many people call late at night. Too drunk,

too exhausted, too few. If we get one call a night, it's a busy night, and still the caller is often a regular or a friend listening in.

Late nights at the station are weird. The station is empty of the staff and administrators that must fill the halls during the day. There are offices and a litany of other recording booths, computers for editing and doing other "things." The people that work after us are as different from each other as possible. Some search the stacks for their show, others bring stuff from home. Some focus on specific genres, some play whatever they feel like. It's the overnight freeform, meant for the truly lost, truck drivers, restock clerks, the love lost, the destitute. The show is for those with no consistency in life, to keep them in line, to keep them in check, to fill their heads with some sound to chase the demons that keep them awake at bay. Occasionally other DJs will lurk the quiet halls, working on their show or some production to make a story. They'll pop their head in as Greg and I play our riff-heavy joy. Comments about the content are never far behind, but Greg and I, after a lifetime of this reaction to our chosen path, are used to the scrutiny. Heavy Metal and all its sub-genres and personalities and death and gore and violence and Satan and hatred, projected both inward and outward, is not for everyone. We are polite in spite of the insults. Music lovers are dicks and they think their preferred genres are the best. You think it'd be different, with all that time spent learning about music in general, that people would be more open and accepting of audio-files of all types. But whatever you like, sucks.

When the last song plays, exhaustion has set in. 2 AM the world really does become silent. There are so few cities that have any signs of life at that hour. In Albuquerque, the drive home is silent. Depending on the DJ, I may stay tuned in for my ten minute drive home. DJ Tahnee is my favorite for that lull drive home. Sometimes she does a deep cuts soul, funk and R&B mix, playing amazing songs by no-hit wonders from some secret vault that exists mostly in her brain. She talks about the records she plays in detail, unlike me and Greg who mostly just rock titles and band names. Tahnee shares the information she's gathered and collected wanting the world to share in her passions. And I do, even if it's just a sliver of time in the shared air space between her and I.

It's black all around me as I crawl into bed. My lover is already asleep, as she has been for hours. The cat's don't even move at this hour, unwilling to protest the disruption. My head is twisted, my brain totally up and active. Sleep is for the sane, the well rounded, the settled. Those are not the skills needed of a night DJ.

Playlist from Broadcast on 4.3.2013



1. **Lurker Of Chalice** - Granite - *Lurker Of Chalice* - 5:28

Lurker of Chalice is a side project of Wrest, mastermind behind the very depressive black metal project Leviathan. Wrest is one of many controversial artists in Black Metal. Exonerated of a rape charge, he was on probation for battery in regards to a fight with his former girlfriend. Much like Varg Vikernes of Burzum, Wrest will probably never escape his past. The work of the artists can not be denied, however. Lurker of Chalice is a

brooding, depressing album and perfect for darkness.

2. **ZOZOBRA**- A Chorus Of War - *Savage Masters* - 1:51

At the time of broadcast this was a new release. Zozobra are a hammering of hardcore and metal into a single, brutal compound. They also have ties to New Mexico through work with Old Man Gloom and Aaron Turner.

3. **Raw Nerve**- Big Changes - *Every Problem Solved* - 1:45



Chicago's Raw Nerve (2009-2012) is somewhat atypical for Tombstone, more punk influenced than metal. But the raw recordings, excessive feedback and beautiful use of reverb makes this hardcore band soaked in darkness and despair. It's similarities to the sonic qualities of Black Metal is why I often include Raw Nerve in my set lists.

4. **Venomous Concept** - Idiot Parade - *Retroactive Abortion* - 2:32

Shane Embury (Napalm Death) and Dan Lilker (Brutal Truth) and their many other projects, past and present are some of my favorites.

5. **Palatka**- Taco Bell Has Nothing To Do With Hardcore - *Discography* - 0:38

Palatka were a grind band from Florida, a place which, in my opinion, has some of the best grind/spazz/powerviolence inspired punk bands in the world. From Shitstorm to Assholeparade!, Holy Mountain and Combatwoundedveteran, Florida is a great breeding ground. I don't know much about Palatka as they are a recent find, but I love them.

6. **Beheaded**- Lament of a Sordid God - *Never to Dawn* - 4:00

Some great death metal by a band that has progressed over its very long and often overlooked existence. Out of Malta of all places, and existing since 1991, people don't talk enough about Beheaded when they talk about Death Metal.

7. **Grisly Amputation** - Hoarding Human Remains - *Cannibalistic Tendencies* - 3:17

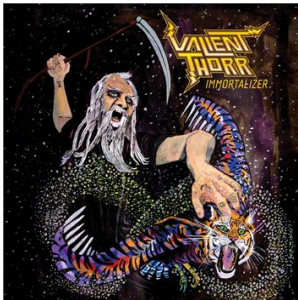
Just a great band I found one day while reading reviews. Metal, and especially its more technical sub genres like Death Metal, can be very formulaic. Some bands do that better than others. G.A. are one of those bands.

8. Sexdrome- Marked As Slave - Grown Younger - 2:32

Black metal inspired Belgians. Grown Younger is one of my favorite records of the genre because it sits on the edge of so many different ideas and sounds. Somehow this found its way on Youth Attack and I wish I had snagged the vinyl when I had the chance. Hopelessly out of print already, get yr blog searching on. Well worth it.

9. Religious As Fuck - Thanks Jerks - Religious as Fuck 7" - 1:18

Members of Assholeparade! make up this band which sounds a lot like Assholeparade!, and that means I love the shit out of them. It's just fast, sloppy, loud music with some dude yelling some shit. Some parts punk, some parts thrash, some parts hardcore. Whatever. Just listen and shut up.



10. Valient Thorr - Masks Of Sanity - Immortalizer - 4:19

Valient Thorr is more rock than metal, more stupid than serious, more party than mopey and just fun to listen to. This was also the one song on my playlist that Greg shook his head at in loving disapproval. Which doesn't mean I won't play them again. Even amongst those learning and loving a genre there are disagreements on what has merit and what does not.

11. Burning Love - Made Out Of Apes - Rotten Thing To Say - 3:27

The singer of Burning Love jumped on a table and screamed at me and my friend Geary once for a good two minutes when I saw them opened for Coliseum in Seattle. I've been in love ever since.



12. Baptists - Bullets - Bushcraft - 3:31

Another Vancouver, BC band (like Burning Love), this was also a new release that I found while doing my weekly research. Every week I try to find new music to play for the masses and this was an awesome find. Southern Lord Records knows what it's doing.

13. Evile – Thrasher - Enter the Grave - 3:09

Thrash band from England. I've been really getting into Thrash a lot lately, especially as the sub-genre is finally finding some footing and expanding with great, new bands who are addicted to Anthrax and D.R.I. Evile will be getting a lot more play as the months go on.

14. Lock Up - The Jesus Virus - Hate Breeds Suffering - 1:34

Shane Embury in his grind project. This features Tomas Lindburg, a great metal vocalist who is often overlooked as well in his debut with the project. Essential.

15. Wormed - The Nonlocality Trilemma - Exodromos - 3:14

From Spain, this is a more technical death/grind hybrid than what I normally get into, but this album is so fantastic. It just hits perfectly at every point and remains heavy and brutal and unrelenting throughout.

16. Nuclear Assault – Survive - Survive - 3:00

Getting back into metal meant getting back in touch with some of the old school stuff I did like and Nuclear Assault was one of those. Dan Lilker's band after he left Anthrax, they never got quite as popular as other thrash contemporaries, which is a shame, but they are one of my favorites.



17. Combatwoundedveteran - With Love, Your Mother - This Is Not An All Erect, All-Red Neon Body - 1:14

Florida. I guess I was pretty into Florida bands the day I made this setlist. Essential grind as far as I am concerned. Plus they have such a great name.



18. Mayhem - Buried by Time and Dust - De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas - 3:34

More controversial Black Metal, this album came out after founder Euronymous was killed by his protégé Varg Vikernes in 1993. De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas is somehow the band's first full length and one of the only widely available releases to feature the work of Euronymous. I won't personally play anything that Euronymous wasn't on because I am one of those assholes that believes that a band without their founder is not really the same band

(Napalm Death excluded).

19. Obsessor - Mental Hell - Mental Hell 7" - 2:35

Tank Crimes records gave away a bunch of their discography online for free, and Obsessor was one of the bands I found. So glad I did. This is stuff I've been

sitting on and found as I went through my archive and decided to include. It also closed out the show, unexpectedly for the night.

*20. **Six Brew Bantha** - Mandatory Termination- Split 7" w/ Agitate - 2:02

*21. **Weedeater** – Mancoon - *Jason... The Dragon* - 2:12

*22. **Goatwhore** - Death to the Architects of Heaven - *Blood for the Master* - 3:42

Total running time 1:00:39

*songs 20-22 were not broadcast due to time restraints; as such you get to revel in the mystery of my possible thoughts on these bands.

An Interview With Adrian Toto

I first became familiar with Adrian Toto's work (known as Android) through some of his stencil pieces painted on the inside and outside of the now defunct gallery and shop, Cellar Door, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. It was the kind of snide, snarky street art that makes one smile. An APD officer looking down at a child who is handing him a flower. It's the type of imagery that can only make you laugh at how ironic and unfortunate our world is. As my days passed in Albuquerque, I got to know Toto better. His artwork and stencils soon popping up around the city. I also found that he was a talented guitarist and he ended up accompanying me at a few shows with The April Decca. He also became the guitarist for Fort Hobo, a semi-retro pop punk band that relies just as much on their respect for punk as it does energy. But on stage Toto is the rock, standing with a dynamic will and poise. His energy comes not through theatrics, but a furious will to cut the audience down. He's a skilled musician whose high tones and striking hand remind one of the great D. Boon. With a recent art opening, forays into zine making, and his new improv noise rock band Dallas, Toto is causing quite the stir in this lonely desert.

KYS: What first got you into stenciling?

AT: I had gotten laid off from a manufacturing job right before Thanksgiving and was watching the economy as a whole take a turn into dumpster; I was pissed and looking outlet. I'm not naturally an angry or aggressive musician, so that was out. I was looking for something people could experience and instantly understand my frustration. I don't remember how I came across it, probably in some unemployment internet binge, but I saw a piece by Blek le Rat and it instantly clicked. The negative space, a simple, impactful image but with time and complexity unnoticed by most.



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KYS: You may or may not be, in part or in whole, connected to a certain stencil that may or may not be seen around the city of Albuquerque. Thoughts?

AT: I can take the credit for the art and the original cuttings but its proliferation is linked to one person's "enthusiasm" for street art and the natural tendencies of humans given free stickers. I see it like this: I made this child which then ran away to the circus only to come back to town years later as the world's premier bear wrestler.

KYS: Stencil Art and Graffiti has had a rise in popularity but it seems like the public often reduces it to comparisons of either Shepard Fairey or Banksy when every stencil artist seems to have their own point. BORF is not Banksy, for example, but there's a reductive world view that all stencil art is the same. Why do you think that is?



AT: Let me get this out there first: Shep hasn't deserved any respect in the actual creation of the art since '96. He's got a team that sits on computers all day tweaking pictures, printing large format, and then cutting for him. Dude gets work up which deserves respect but his whole process is so corporatized he shouldn't even count as an individual artist anymore. Banksy is probably the reason most stencil artists got started but I'm tired of unknown, amazing artists getting their work shared to the masses (mostly on FB) and Banksy getting the credit. Half of Nick Walker's art has been shared, reported, and labeled as being Banksy's, which is a fucking shame. I think even with its popularity, stencil art is all viewed the same because it's all still looked down on by others. I've had conversations with artists locally that told me they "messed around" with stencils when they were teenagers but have now moved on. Fuck you. That's the bulk of my work but it was just a teenage whimsy for you. Fuckers. Man I'm going way off here.

KYS: I think that's a good point you bring up about Shep. Part of me loves him for his Warholian ways, but it's like he only got it half right. Warhol wasn't about being co-opted by commercialism, he was more interested in creating his own brand. Warhol didn't sell himself to others, he made his own outlets. Magazines, TV shows etc. All in house. It was disturbing when Russian artist Pasha's obituary recently called him the Russian Banksy when a real critical look at their work is quite different. Banksy to me is a rabble rouser, the controversy is a huge a part of his art. But he also operates in a freer Europe. Pasha's work may be similar in execution and aesthetics, but the nature and even landscape of his work adds context. Also, the appeal of stenciling is that you can mass produce it, but more and more of the trends seem to be towards larger pieces instead of the repetition of something small. On the one hand, I love the creativity, but there is something about the saturation of a more simple image I find appealing. It's more propaganda, a kind of subversive non-message that seems anonymously sanctioned.

So I am wondering, especially with the use of your stencil, which I equate locally to a sort of Warholian/Borf type thing, what you do feel about it's proliferation. I don't want to talk so much about the who or the why, but when you see the stencil about town how do you see it?

AT: That stencil and others repeated in mass like it bring me the feeling of one great big "FUCK YOU" to authority. That's what it all really boils down to in my head: "Keep up if you can, buff squad."

Any stencil artist worth their weight has done at least one stencil that has been spread on a mass scale, but the turn towards larger pieces is a sign of the community's attempt to mature and be taken more seriously. One very deep and powerful piece can inspire the same effect as smaller images in mass. It's also ego. There is a competitiveness in street artists unlike I've seen in any other style of art except for graffiti artists. Bigger, brighter, and better placement are to me some of the only ways street artists and graffiti artists can still be compared. But that's a whole other discussion.

KYS: So aside from awesome visual art, you're also a musician. Your band, Fort Hobo, is something of a cult phenomenon here in the 505. I've personally described you guys as brilliant and as worthy as the classics and the band does seem to feed off of the frequencies of SOCal Punk. I'm curious about the birth of the band and how you developed into the force that you are today?

AT: I sort of stumbled into the band to be honest. Nate and Andy had been trying to put a project together and so far it had been misfires. Then Billy told me, pestered really, (that) I should come jam with these dudes I didn't know and after a session we all hugged and became a band. No shit. Hugs. All these dudes are more of the punk veterans whereas I come from a strange mix of blues, fusion, classical, and classic rock type background and I think that has been the real spark. I don't play punk music, Billy is hardcore 4/4, Andy's a jittery/spazz bass, and Nate is the fucking Cali drums. The fucking mix works, live we're a bunch of assholes and people seem to love it.



KYS: A Fort Hobo show is intense, filled with costume, hijinx, self inflicted harm. There's both this happy violence and serious chaos. But you're more on the intense side of things than the theatrics. What drives your part of the show?

AT: I am an insanely anxious person and one of my worst fears is being in front of a crowd except when I've got a guitar strapped to me. It's my shield. Now to really answer your question: I'm a musician at heart. I really can't sing but through the guitar I can. For me it's the purest way to express myself without the irrational fear of judgment. When I perform I'm speaking to people through my hands and to me that's more powerful than words. I can just shut my eyes and let it all flow. A kind of meditation or detachment from life.

KYS: If I compared your playing in Fort Hobo to D. Boon, how would you take that? Because I totally am.

AT: Shit. That's really too nice. He never identified himself as a punk musician either and in that sense I can understand the comparison, but what he did for this music can never be equaled.



KYS: That's kind of the distinction I have with Fort Hobo. It's not strictly punk but it's rooted in that same mentality as bands like The Big Boys or The Minutemen. People in the first wave that already refused to be limited to what the genre was presenting. They were excited by the energy and fury, but they were something more, naturally, than just power chords and constant ranting.

You've also recently been playing in what seems like an improv band, Dallas. It has some of the same elements of danger. What's going on with that project?

AT: We just had our second practice recently, as a trio, and have a show coming up in early May which will be all originals unlike our previous performance at a

covers show. Enough of the self-advertising. Every song has a shape to it and a slightly rehearsed flow, but for the most part it's improvise what you can in any given section. It has the freedom and spacing of jazz but with a harder edge. It's also really fucking nerve racking. Following Lyman on drums can be a challenge but in that chaos-of-sorts real creativity happens. I grew up listening to a lot of fusion and acid jazz shit and the chance to find a riff in the storm of a song, even if it only works for 30 seconds, is a great accomplishment and brings me a real sonic satisfaction. My explanation might sound totally weird and possibly make no sense but it's really hard to describe the feeling when things just fall into place. How often can anyone say that about everyday life anymore?

KYS: In terms of form, it reminded me a lot of early Make*Up shows. They had a similar approach where it wasn't the structure that was important, but the energy. It's not something I've seen in a long time. You see bands now that are sloppy and that seems like it could all come crashing in, but not many bands rely on their instincts. Sloppiness is not the same as improv at all. But improv is not the same as jamming either. There's a lot more negotiation. It's interesting that you mention fusion and acid jazz, because I know you're also into Metal which is a very regimented, precise genre of music (mostly). You're also an institutional scholar of music, in that you learned theory and composition. But unlike so many people I come across, you seem really open. Where does that balance come from? It's really surprising to me.

AT: Before starting college I was a self-taught guitarist. I had played violin since I was 10 and that helped me with any music reading needed but for the most part I taught myself through listening to covers and then completely ignoring covers around age 17. For my college auditions into a classical program I performed a piece I had written on a regular acoustic guitar, and while shocking to the program's head, it showed my potential as a classical guitarist. I love composition but theory can get fucked. Theory turned me off from playing music for a few years. Too many people use theory to dictate their composition decisions, and it generally turns out to sound like dick. My belief has always been: Why should I listen to or play one type of music? Anyone that does that is lying to themselves. If it feels right, go with it. I'm definitely my parents' son. My mother was a violinist that listened to everything from Mozart to Oingo Boingo and now metal, and my father played guitar in tons of different bands. My tastes are a Frankenstein and I really wouldn't have it any other way.

KYS: Outside of art and music you've also recently entered the world of zine making. Not only that but you put out two zines that were both very unique from each other and showed a real understanding for the craft that most first timers and beginners don't get. What inspired you to crawl into this bed?

AT: Living in Albuquerque and this art community it was really only a matter of time before I moved into the zine-verse. My first zine, "Red Headed Step Dad", was a super straight forward booklet. A simple and clean documentation of my anger management issues. Whereas Fenso Publications #1 I wanted to be confusing, surreal, and most of all no way resembling the look of RHSD. I'm planning the next Fenso right now and trying to design another new/strange fold and hopefully it all works out. If not, I'll probably try to perfect my double-quarter-multi-sided fold design and really work out the super tight tolerances. I guess

both zines are a good description of myself. One very straight laced looking and angry and the other diving into my '3 a.m.' brain.

KYS: What do you get out of doing zines that you don't find in the other disciplines you do, especially since you do so much with precision?

AT: Zines are a different kind of creative freedom. With art or music you're always trying to find the proper way, as an example, to say or express "go fuck yourself." But with zines and creative writing in general you can simply say "go fuck yourself." I've always enjoyed writing and my brain is stimulated in a completely different way when doing so but I never had the available outlet until I learned of zines. Coming from Youngstown, OH I had never heard of a zine before moving here. I thought you were all nutters at first and I still feel that way, but in a completely understanding sense and with a great amount of fondness. It was like, "Holy shit I can paint, play music, and write without having to choose one over the other. Fuck me."



KYS Head Idiot Erik Gamlem and Toto at the last Fort Hobo Show

Gears of War



Video games have always been a very weird aspect of my life. I've played them since I was a kid, first in the arcade at the Straw Hat Pizza in Granite Bay, then when Nintendo tossed up an at home console. My parents didn't have a lot of money and the games were still super expensive back then, so I rarely had all the crazy games that my friends had. I mostly had to settle for the secondary titles, if I got a new game at all. My first real jam was Skate or Die. I would pretend that each run was a different pro skater and have competitions. I kept a logbook over time to record their scores and rank them. But I was never really

obsessed with video games. In fact, through most of my teens and twenties I didn't play video games or upgrade my console like my peers. I dabbled in Doom and Doom II, rocked some Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 for a bit and upgraded to the XBOX 360 about three years ago because I needed a DVD player and happened to find a used one real cheap. But on the whole, I am not a video game aficionado. I wouldn't even consider myself a novice. I don't spend too much time or money on video games and I'm not really that great at playing them.

A few months ago, my partner's nephew came over to our house and brought some games with him. He's eight years old and loves video games. He doesn't get to play them with the freedom of an older, more autonomous teen, so he was excited his parents were letting him have reign over the video games at our house. He brought a game called Gears of War to our house and I played with him a little bit. My partner was familiar with this game and played along too. We got hooked. Later, we took our change jar and turned it into cash. We decided we were going to buy our own copy of Gears of War 2, along with a few other cheap games. We brought it home and played it fairly regularly. Suddenly it became our way of chilling out together. It was easy and relaxing and for us, a fun way to spend time together. Eventually we borrowed Gears of War 3 and kept on playing.

The premise of Gears of War is that you are a soldier on an earth-like planet called Sera. At some point in the "universe" history of Gears of War, some scientists accidentally awaken a race of humanoid creatures that were hibernating deep under the earth. War breaks out between the two races and it is your job (at least in the story mode) to try to defeat these creatures known as the Locust Horde. There are also free modes where you can be a Locust creature and shoot at the humans.

My relationship with Gears of War is tied directly to my relationship with my partner. I'm not sure either of us would play the game with as much regularity if we didn't play it together. Rarely do either of us play it when the other isn't around, unless one of us is gone for an extended trip away from the home. It's very much a pursuit of our pairing. It's what WE do to relax at the end of a trying night, or if we're having a lazy weekend afternoon. We get into the game's features and statistics pretty hardcore. I love statistic collection, it's one of my favorite features for any game I play. We compete to collect medals and reach goals within the game. Sometimes we play in tandem, but total silence, other times we talk about our day with each other, or share



stories about our lives. There isn't any kind of set rules that we have made for playing, just that we have a lot of fun and get to spend time with each other. It's our shared activity of choice.

It's unusual to bond over such senseless violence. As imaginary as it all is, the story line still has this sense of imperialism where one side (the humans) are righteous and defending themselves from invasion and the other side (the locusts) are the "other" Serians (?) that are somehow the representation of evil. There is a moral conflict in this game that to me mimics larger war conflicts through the eyes of typical American patriotic bullshit. Somehow the (mostly) white COG army of the human race are righteous through their flaws and out to "save", while the locust are

somehow evil after being instigated and disturbed by the human race. Further, this game has a pretty critical look at science as the fault of all this. As the series continues, scientists looking to fight these locusts just end up making things worse by creating super destructive weapons, hyper versions of the creatures and other manner of chaos. There isn't much commentary within game play about the greed of this race of human-like people (though it is an underlying aspect of the story) and seems to portend if it weren't for science, none of this would have happened.

I pull the trigger, or stomp on the face of locust, and revel in the blood-splatter. The violence and gore entertains me. Something inside me finds this thrilling. Mostly though, it's the different stats I can accumulate using all the various means of killing the game has to offer. I can put a boot to the face or slap a grenade on my enemy. The violence and gore is made surreal by the fact that it's not against another human. It purposely desensitizes what violence actually means. On my own planet, right now, children are under attack by armies deployed from my country or funded by my own empirically minded government. There is no option in Gears of War for negotiation, for dialog, for shared communities. It's conflict resolution the only way we are taught is effective; through the use of force. Why send an embassy of negotiators at any point when you can just constantly shoot them with an unending supply of weaponry. This isn't democracy, it's rule by force and fire. It's just like real life, but leaves out all the aspects of war that make it so horrible. It's just a hero and his gang of sidekicks and supporting cast. The irony of all of this doesn't escape me.

And yet I find myself in front of the TV fairly often. I look forward to my time playing Gears of War because it's time I get to spend with the person I love. It's even more important to me as she deals with the trials of being a caretaker for her mother. The stress of dealing with government agencies, passive people in desk jobs that don't want to help, coupled with the fact that the person in question is in dire need of help and health care, has strained her life and relationships. And in my patience and

waiting and hours of worry and concern, I know that the controllers are still there and with any luck I'll get an hour of her time before she gets too tired, too exhausted to keep her eyes open any longer. I'll listen to her talk about her day, about the obstacles and hurt and emotion as we seek a kind of masked revenge. We forge ahead, weapons in hand and a type of anger and frustration in our hearts at a world that is cruel and uncaring. Sera is a stand-in for a world where the opposition to peace is a lot more complex. We can let loose and express something visceral without guilt and introspection. We spill our own blood in the pixelated world of violence programmed for us, because sometimes it's just too much to spill your own blood in the real world anymore. Sometimes it's easier to have an outlet for conflict in some kind of fantastic violence, because conflict never stops. There's no off button in the real world and no one is keeping statistics of the matches you win because no one really cares. It's a complicated relationship that we have with violence in this culture. Sometimes, it's all too much to think about.

Stereolab, December 8th, 1997. Philadelphia, PA. Trocadero Theater.

I wish I could remember the year. Or had the ticket stub. Or even remembered the streets in which all of this story occurs on. I can (and for accuracy's sake probably will) look all this information up, get a real good time line of it and present it as whole. But you should know, dear reader, that in my mind, many of the details are lost. Some forever. Some I won't be able to look up. Names of people we only met briefly in this tale. Street addresses of some of the events. Even the direction we were facing. Some of those details that are lost are ones I never bothered obtaining or retaining. I didn't know the characters would stay with me this long. Not that day. I had very little idea that the adventure ahead of us was one that would be so compelling.

There are some details I feel I should fill you in in beforehand. Kurt [REDACTED], at the time of this story, was my best friend. We played in bands together and loved music together. We had been friends since we were in middle school. He drew comics, played baseball and was tall and lanky. I was short, wrote poems, and loved to skateboard. We first loved metal and then our musical tastes grew and grew. When we went to shows he always drove. It was around the time of this adventure that I would begin to drive myself and our relationship would soon splinter, for other reasons, but independence from each other was part of it I realize now. Kurt and I were not so similar though, it seemed we were at the time. He was kind, gentle and shy. I was loud, boisterous and confrontational. This is about as simple as I can make it. Any relationship is, of course, more complex and layered, as are the people in it. Kurt drew the best out of me, but sadly he also saw the worst of me. He was the first person, and would not be the last, to tell me how cold and cruel I could be. This is about as deep as I can or will go in speaking of my old friend that I haven't seen in over a decade. This is my version of the story. Should you know him or happen to meet him, don't hold any of it against him. Don't ask him to defend these memories. His story will be vastly different.

The idea that you could travel to another state to see a band play multiple dates on tour had not yet occurred to us. However, sometime in the fall or winter of 1997 Kurt suggested we get tickets to see Stereolab at the Trocadero theater in Philadelphia. The album *Emperor Tomato Ketchup* was a shared favorite of ours and we were both immersed in the interplanetary sounds of the band's most recent release, *Dots and Loops*. So, the day tickets went on sale, Kurt called up, right at 10AM, and ordered them over the phone. We requested the day off of work, both of us employed at the same Motophoto and talked for weeks about our upcoming adventure.



A photo of the author taken by Kurt in his parent's back yard. Circa summer of 1997

The night before, Stereolab played in Washington, DC. I remember I didn't go with him to that show. I decided to go see Frodus, a local post-punk/hardcore inspired band whom we had also just discovered. I remember very few details about that show. Or if this is even correct. I do remember not wanting to see Stereolab two nights in a row. Part of it was because the idea of seeing them somewhere other than the Black Cat was appealing and partly because my love for them was waning. Kurt and I were growing apart. In a few short months we would no longer be friends. I now realize the timeline of our fracture started on that night. Curious.

It was December and unusually warm for that time of year. We would forego jackets and wore light sweaters in lieu of something more sensible. Later that evening we would regret this decision. We left our Washington, DC suburban town around noon, not wanting to take any chances being late and heeding Kurt's father's advice that traffic on I-95 could get tricky, we didn't want to get stuck in any of the rush hour congestion along our route. We would pass Washington, DC and Baltimore and their emerging suburbs on our way. Also, we were unfamiliar with Philadelphia and wanted to ensure we had enough time in case we got lost.



The drive up was, mostly, uneventful. We took I-895, the Baltimore Beltway instead of the straighter shot up I-95. I'm pretty sure that Kurt got a speeding ticket in Maryland, as he was prone to, because his car was a magnet for cops. On the day he bought his car he picked me up and insisted we drive to Smash! in Washington, DC where he spent an insufferable amount

of money on vinyl stickers of various bands. He put them everywhere on that damn car. His license plate also said M Bungle, in honor of the Mike Patton outlet, Mr. Bungle. The car, a sports model of some sort already stood out because of its unusual make, it's maroon/purple color, and that it was being driven by 6' 2" blonde man with a wicked grin. The stickers, including those of the Grateful Dead, much to my chagrin, didn't exactly help the car blend in. But this would be the chariot for this adventure. It provided what we desired.

We got to Philadelphia while the sun was still high in the sky. The show was to take place at the Trocadero Theater. We had eaten on the way to the show, somewhere outside of Baltimore, so we weren't hungry. We drove up and down Arch Street once we located the Club, trying to decide what to do. I noticed a few tattoo shops. I was twenty and had yet to lace my skin with wizard dust. Today, on this adventure, was the time. I asked Kurt what he thought, he and I getting tattoos. He was down.

Since there was a shop close to the Trocadero we decided to try and find parking where we could keep the car for a long period. We managed to find a parking

spot that had just opened up after time restriction hours, or so we thought. It's possible we ignored or were aloof to the signs and got a ticket then and not when driving. Kurt got a lot of parking tickets, sometimes for really dumb stuff on his part, and others because of bad luck. An adventure from our stifling suburbs into any city pretty much always brought some kind of citation.

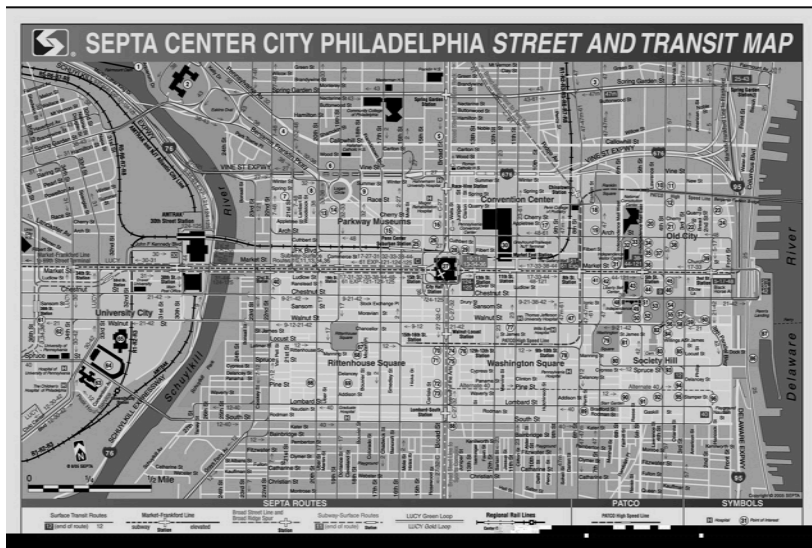
We walked into the shop, the name of which is no longer a part of my memory. An old lady, frumpy with gray hair, and a young man dressed in all black clothing, were in the shop. Kurt and I discussed what we wanted to get. I had decided to get the symbol for Ohm, the sound of the universe. Kurt wanted to get the cover of the Stereolab 7" he purchased the night before, but couldn't remember exactly what it looked like. He decided he was going to try and draw it from memory. We discussed this with the tattoo artist. When I told him I wanted the Ohm symbol he challenged me immediately. He demanded I tell him what it stood for. I seemed puzzled, the tension had built in the room, but I replied with a dictionary definition. I had been taking a class on Tibetan Buddhism and we were studying the practice of meditation through chanting. After hearing my answer, relieved, the tattooist then showed me three Ohm tattoos on his body. He would do kanji and symbols for people all the time, he didn't care if they ruined their bodies with iconography they didn't understand, but he was a practicing Buddhist and he refused to tattoo the Ohm symbol on just anyone off the streets. The older lady also had an Ohm symbol. Her stares at us never softened the entire time we were in there.

While Kurt tried desperately to scribble his memories of the previous night's merch, I got set up and ready to go. When I sat in the chair, Kurt gave up on getting ink done and asked if he could take pictures. The tattoo artist talked to me quite a bit, which helped because the feeling of getting the tattoo was shocking. It didn't hurt after awhile, but as he explained the process while permanently administering the scar to my body, I wondered what it was I was doing to my body. I had to consider that I was scarring myself, deeply and in a way that would never heal. Kurt and I both asked a lot of questions, about tattooing, Philadelphia and spirituality. Still young and dumb, we were also confident and coy, but still full of wonderment at the world. It seemed like it took for hours to finish, but the simple black design, no more than three inches probably only took minutes. But that's how time works. When you experience something for the first time it seems to last forever. In a way, that time in the chair never really left me, or I never left it. Though I now have several tattoos, each with it's own unique story, the memory of my first tattoo remains absolutely vivid to this day. Some of it has faded over time, the details, the names, but not the colors and the pictures in my mind. The sound of the gun, the needles scraping my skin are senses I can recall with ease.

Sixty dollars later and I was marked for life. I got bandaged up and we made our way out the door. Kurt was a little jealous but we made a pact that we would get tattoos when we got back to Virginia the next weekend. Back on the streets of Philadelphia we wondered what to do next. Kurt wanted to check on the car so we headed back that way. After we eased his anxiety we bumped, almost literally, into two other guys. They had just gotten out of their car and were heading towards the venue to get in line. We struck up a conversation with them. They were from Texas on winter break and following Stereolab around for a few

weeks. They had been in DC the night before as they were about seven days in on a trip that would last until the tour's end. They had met up with the band and had dinner with them and hung out on their tour bus. We were pretty jealous. Here we thought it was groundbreaking to leave our hometown to see a band, and these guys had been on the road for a week, seeing them every night.

During our conversation with our new friends, one of them asks, nonchalantly if we'd like to see a dead body. Like that opening scene out of *Boyz n the Hood*, Kurt and I looked at each other nervously but shortly, giving a shrug and saying ok. The four of us walk down tenth street towards the Greyhound station. We make a turn down a side street and find an alleyway. About 30 yards into the alleyway is a man, laying mostly on his back, but slightly propped up against the brick wall, his head visible and turned just slightly towards us. I remember his tongue was sticking out and the smell of the alley was that of old piss, shit, discarded Chinese food and that it was filled with plastic bags and newspapers. We stood frozen, unable to move. I can't remember the young man's face, only that he was black, with a slight afro, and wore a collared polo shirt and corduroy pants. It was clear that we were looking at what was promised, the lifeless body



of a stranger. The world seemed frozen, but in the silence the noises of the city became almost

unbearable. So much so that it's hard to imagine hearing the shuffling behind us in the opposite alleyway. A man shouted at us. "Hey, you boys. Get the hell outta here. You don't need to be bothering him". He dragged his leg, as if the world was ash, but he was too weak to effectively walk towards us. He pointed and shook a finger at the four of us who looked at him with equal bewilderment. Our companions, nonplussed at this point, turned and walked away. A short second or two later, Kurt and I followed. We didn't talk, but our feet moved quicker than normal. In fact, I was able to keep up with Kurt, my much taller friend, for the first time in our lives.

Back at the Trocadero, still terribly early, we separated from our short term companions and essentially kicked rocks as they say. Kurt and I contemplated using the tickets we purchased over the guest list passes he managed to score the night before while talking to one of the members. Kurt and I were both

burgeoning photographers, my interests had increased since he helped score me a job at Motophoto. He had taken photos the night before and managed to develop and print them for the band. Or so I recall. My memory of much of the night afterwards is shaky at best. I was too far gone after looking at the by-product of death. The carcass of a lonely, young, forgotten and discarded young man sat in an alleyway nearby and I had seen it. Everything else just seemed sort of surreal. I felt the blood and ink in my arm dripping from my skin, barely caught by the bandage that I wanted badly to remove.

The doors opened and we went inside the theater, deciding to use our press passes and letting our purchased tickets go unused, too excited to try and sell them or give them away. We made way to the merch table, me wanting to score a copy of the same 7" that Kurt did the night before, as he told me Stereolab often released these off-label singles exclusive for different tours. To this day, the piece of vinyl has sat in my collection, unplayed and mostly untouched, except for now to confirm that I actually still owned it. A memento that would probably score me a decent amount of net-gain on ebay, it's an object that holds part of my soul, like a horcrux that has power over me, the marrow of my spirit dug into the grooves of the songs.

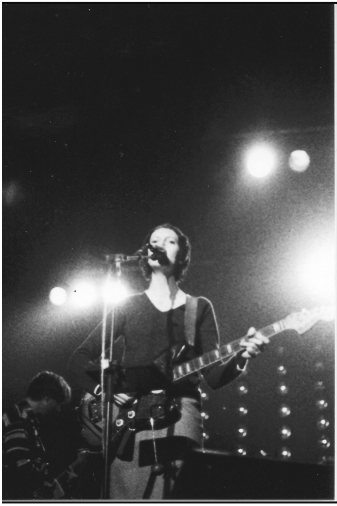
After making my purchase, I decided to take off the bandage of my tattoo. With no ointment of any kind and in the men's room of what is essentially a rock club venue, I undressed my upper body of the long sleeve shirts and threw the bloody cloth into the trash can. I used the rough paper towels and hand soap to wash it as instructed, but would not properly tend to it for hours afterwards. As such, it scarred more than many of my later tattoos, and seems to sit more underneath the skin as opposed to atop. It carries a certain weight because of the poor initial care, but the bandage was itchy and I was impatient, wanting to show off my tattoo, despite the long sleeves. I tied my sweater around my waist. I looked like an idiot.

Kurt and I, an hour before show time, took our customary spot at the front of the stage, right in the center, a place we would remain for the rest of the evening. It's hard to recall what he and I would talk about in these hour-long waits. We were always early on my account, because I never wanted to miss anything back in those days. My desire for punctuality would also always be a constant strain on our relationship. We were both tightly wound young men, but Kurt had the advantage of recreational drug and alcohol use that I would not pick up until later in life.

The High Llamas opened the show. Featuring an ex-member of Stereolab, the set felt exhausting, long-winded and pretentious to me at the time. I prefer to keep that memory, rather than research the band once again. As a means of memory recall I have already dug into the catalog of Stereolab from this time period to remind myself of the sensations, the narrative and the details as best I can. The High Llamas did nothing for me. I don't even think I bothered to take any photos of them, but I knew Kurt would go through more of his film than he would have wanted to before Stereolab even took the stage.

I am short, and the awful thing about standing front and center of the Trocadero stage, at least as of 1997, was that the stage was idiotically high. A male of 5'6"

stature could not comfortably rest their arms on the stage, let alone see the band well over the monitors. But, I did my best to soak it all in. Despite being a very bizarre, art driven band with lots of nuances to their music, live, Stereolab was loud as shit. Maybe it was because they are French and maybe the French are insane or deaf or both, or maybe it's because they had like ten fucking farfisa players plugged into bass amps, but Stereolab overloaded the shit out of your senses when they played. Fuck it, maybe they just wanted to play stadiums and took it out on their audience for being too small for such shenanigans. The Trocadero was a better venue to hold them than the Black Cat, where I had or would see them on another occasion, but the show was still overbearingly hostile for a band I usually listened when relaxing or to fall asleep.



The whole thing was absolutely spectacular, however. It was, for all intents and purposes, a rock and roll show. Probably the first "indie" band I had seen that carried themselves with utter professionalism. They clearly gave a shit about

the audience and strived to create the best, most memorable experience they could. While the specifics of the songs they played are lost on me, the show's sensory pleasures still remain pretty firm in my mind, with great glowing lights, bouncing sounds, and a hypnotic repetition that they drove and built upon. Unlike their albums, which only hinted at the sheer power, Stereolab let loose live and dare I say, went for it. We were spellbound and happy.

After the encore and the rise of the house lights, Kurt and I headed out the door and into the chilly streets of Philadelphia. We walked around the back of the venue to the band's tour bus, meeting up with our prior companions who were waiting for the door to open. Lætitia Sadier opened the door with a smile and talked for a few minutes with us. I didn't say much, mostly because I didn't have anything to ask, but also partly because I was stunned by how mesmerizing she was. The quality of her presence was not unlike the music she made or the singing that accompanied her music. It was dream like, fantastical, like she was some kind of fairy or demi-goddess. She just had that kind of presence that strikes and silences you. Kurt gave her a packet of photographs and we thanked her for letting us into the show and promptly left. We got in Kurt's car, parked just around the corner, and left for home.



Lætitia Sadier of Stereolab

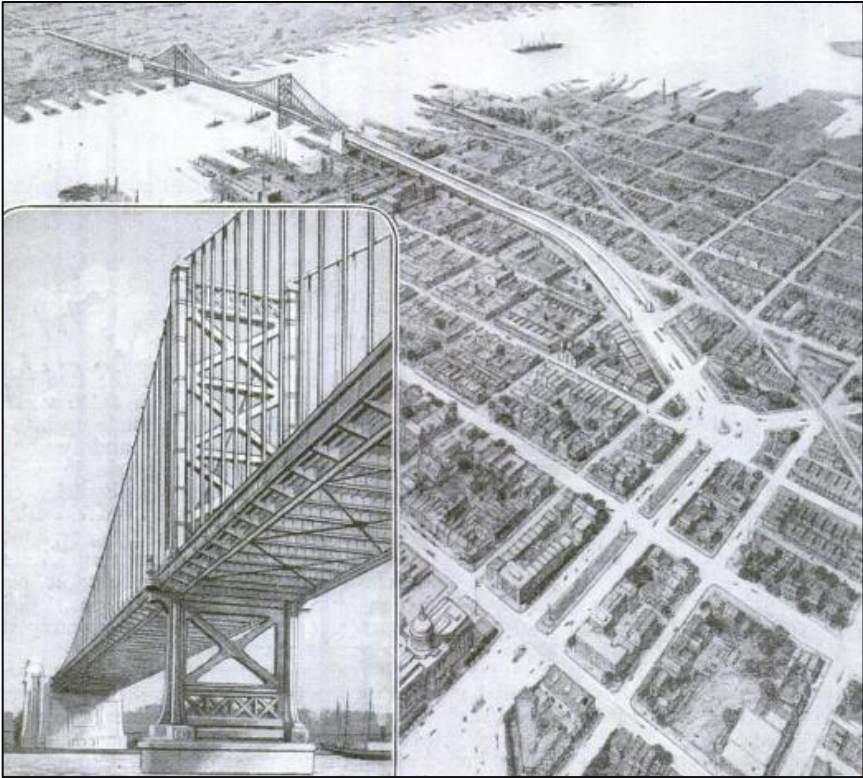


We were high on life. Kurt had recorded the show on a tiny micro tape recorder and we were excited to play it. He kept it in his shirt pocket and the tiny sounds emitted from his chest as we made our way to I-95. Or so we thought. In the confusion, the light headedness, the excitement of our adventure, we were in a haze. The road signs in this new city confusing.

While writing this, I consulted maps of the highway system in and around Philadelphia. What I believe happened is this, we got on the Vine Street Expressway, Interstate 676 headed for 95 south, but instead of getting off we went over the Benjamin Franklin Bridge and into Camden, New Jersey. As we came off the bridge and into this new township I knew instantly that we did not, under any circumstances, want to be there. The town had little in the way of street lights, the buildings were old and unkempt, and nearly every corner had at least one liquor store. The air pressure carried a weight that made you feel unsettled. My privileged white-boy ass knew that I was not welcome in this neighborhood and for damn good reasons. Kurt and I were unsure what to do, but I instructed him to stay the course, as I had seen signs for 95. As luck would have it, we would return back to our desired destination.

The thing is, though, the Schuylkill Expressway exit is not a very easy one to navigate when it is pitch black on a cold December night, and you have never been to Camden, NJ. We were at a stoplight and needed to make a right turn, which the signs stated was forbidden from the lane we were in. But that was

where we needed to go and backtracking was not

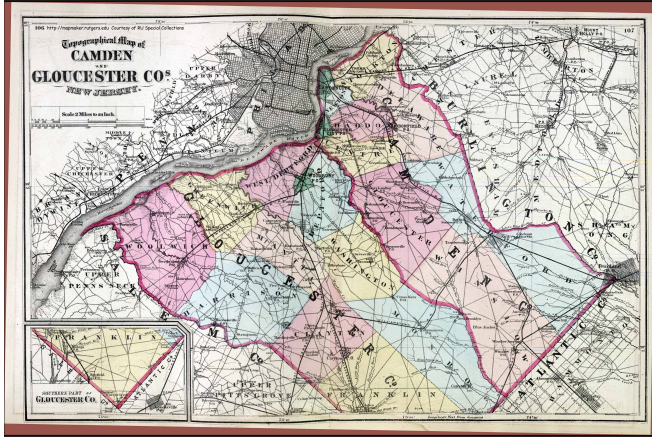


an option, or so I said in my role as navigator. Kurt made the illegal turn and headed for the toll booth. The intensity of the police lights that exploded behind us was more magnificent than the light show we were treated to not 30 minutes earlier. A very loud, very commanding voice instructed us in no uncertain terms to pull over as Kurt fumbled for change to pay the toll.

Several police officers surrounded the car, guns clearly in hand, but not drawn on us. Both Kurt and I had lights flashed in our eyes and were instructed to exit the car. Kurt was taken to the front and I to the back. We were both told to put our hands on the car while cops searched us with an uncomfortable viciousness. Every crevice of my body was squeezed and my arms shaken. The cop grabbed my penis and testicles and squeezed them, firmly, enough that it was painful for a moment and I jumped. I was told to “settle the fuck down,” as if somehow getting my cock tortured was a regular occurrence in my life. My pockets were emptied for me, a wallet and house keys laid on the car. I was instructed to take off my already too thin jacket and shoes. A dog was searching Kurt’s car as he was being frisked. Our eyes met, mine with an intense glare that said to him, “if you have any fucking pot in your fucking car and we go to jail tonight I will fucking kill you.” His look back to me was, “Why do I always listen to you?”

After interrogating us for a good five minutes, including not being believed where we were after producing (unused) ticket stubs, the cops let us know that they had been following us since we got off the bridge. They said the car looked suspicious for the neighborhood because of the out of state license plate and the decorations that adorned the bumper. They asked us repeatedly if we were in the

neighborhood to buy drugs and why we hadn't stopped. We continually repeated that we were just trying to get on 95 south so we could go home to Virginia. They told us in no uncertain terms that it was highly curious for two white male college students to be in this neighborhood for any other reason than to buy drugs, and that our illegal u-turn was enough for them to arrest us as it constituted said "suspicious" behavior and evading the police.



The police dog returned no findings, much to my shivering body's relief and the cop instructed me to get in the car. I went to grab my keys and wallet and was reprimanded. I made my way to the passenger side of the car and sat down. The police officer handed me my stuff, wordless,

emotionless. I put my jacket on. I turned up the heater. The cop closed the door for me.

Kurt sat down after me, putting his ID and information back in his wallet. The cop handed him a citation for the illegal u-turn and told us in no uncertain terms that we were to return, even by accident. We tried to ask if we were going the right way, terrified and confused and were instructed to "move the fuck along and not waste anymore of their time." We drove on.

And on, and on and on. Southbound in the darkness. Time was motionless as our bodies carved against the earth at a steady speed. We talked about so many things. Our friendship, the strains we could no longer ignore, our band, our friends, the concert, everything we wanted to do musically, how fucked up cops were, how fucked up Camden was. In a single day together, we had grown so much. Just as we had over the years, since middle school, through high school and now into early adulthood. We talked about love, loss, fear and desire. It was as close as Kurt and I would ever be, had ever been, and little did we know it was the last great thing we would share. Two months later, the day before Valentines day, Kurt would inform me that he and my girlfriend had been having a romantic relationship for several months without my knowledge. This action of betrayal on their part would forever break our relationships apart. I never spoke to Kurt again.

That night was transformative, one I remember so clearly, because it was so unexpected. The adventure that I had with my best friend was not the one I imagined. It became more than just a lazy, fun time doing something we had always dreamed of. I was forever changed, forever wrapped in a love I would soon lose, one that would force me to explore the world alone. For seven years I had this partner, this friend, this companion, and we were inseparable from each other, despite a great deal of differences and often clashing personalities. But I loved Kurt [REDACTED] more than anyone, and he loved me the same. We saw past

the flaws, the insecurities, and embraced our differences, not just with the world but with each other, until we no longer could. But now, he's been absent from my life for longer than he was a part of it, and from what I can gather we have gone in two separate ways, are lives are now so vastly different, not only from each other, but also from what we always expected.

As I creep closer to my forties then I am comfortable with, I still wonder about Kurt and I. The unanswered questions still float in my head, and the deep feeling of betrayal, while dimmed, is still present. The sadness of loss, a loss that maybe I could have prevented by being a better friend is still there. I don't think, after all these years I've learned how to be a great friend, a kind person. My love and admiration for people is just as intense as my criticism and frustration of them. It's a battle I struggle with and suffer because of, often alienating those I love the most, and whom love me the most.

This is the story I've carried with me for more than a dozen years, having since had so many more experiences, adventures, loves and betrayals, songs, and late night drives. I've accumulated so many scars and tattoos, and seen thousands of miles of road pass by. I've taken myself across the country and learned unexpected things about myself. But this is the story, whether I like it or not, that defines me as a person. And I've tried to tell it in a way that makes sense, that is fair (mostly to myself) and still honest (without passing judgment on my old friend). But I feel no sense of relief, having finally shared it with the world, having said it all out loud now, having left it down on the page, in a kind of permanence I am never quite comfortable with. It sits with a weight I will never escape. My turning point is also an anchor to a past I can't forget. This is the beautiful crux of life. Thank You.

Notes On *Stereolab*, December 8th, 1997. Philadelphia, PA. *Trocadero Theater*.

Following are notes I made based on research I conducted while writing this story as a way to augment some of the details I have forgotten over time. I include them out of a desire to be factual and also to fill in for the reader the extent of my memory with in the piece itself.

1. The Show took place at the Trocadero on December 8th, 1997. I used this as a title, despite the first paragraph, because this was generally how I cataloged this story in my mind. The exact dates were never clear. I used a website called songkick.com and an article from the Philadelphia City Paper about the High Lamas to verify the date.
2. The High Lamas opened the show. I used the same article from the Philadelphia City Paper to verify this.
3. The 7" cover that Kurt eventually did get tattooed was the "Iron Man/The Incredible He Woman" 7". I also had to confirm that I did own this record. I wasn't sure and had to review my record collection. It was pressed on red vinyl. Further information on this and all of Stereolab's releases can be found at www.stereolab.co.uk/discography
4. The Trocadero was and continues to be located at 1003 Arch St Philadelphia, PA 19107
5. The tattoo shop was also on Arch street but is not Philadelphia Eddies, the only shop I could find presently in the area. It may have been in that store front though.
6. As best I can figure from reviewing maps of the area, the body was found in the alleyway close to 10th and Filbert near the Greyhound station.
7. The Bridge to Camden from Philadelphia that we crossed is the Ben Franklin Bridge. All other streets and names were also verified through a review of maps of the area. All this information was derived from Google Maps based on their present, rather than any historical, information.

The following paragraph in reference to the 1991 John Singleton film, *Boyz N the Hood* was edited from the piece for clarity. I include it here in part for transparency. My experience in seeing the body in the alley way of Philadelphia is still surreal to me and I can not ignore the similarities between it and a film that also had a profound effect on me. While this is the centerpiece of my memory and the story, that the narrative is expressed similarly to the film is on purpose. It is the only thing in my life that I had at the time that I could connect to the experience I was having to make any sense of it. The film serves both as a means of processing and disassociating what I witnessed.

The crux of John Singleton's 1991 cinematic debut Boys N The Hood begins with a young Tre Styles hanging out with his friends playing football. Chris, Doughboy and Ricky accompany the boy. After some bigger kids try to steal their football and bully them, the quartet heads home. While walking, a curly haired, skinny Chris asks his crew if they want to see a dead body. Bewildered and curious the boys agree. They walk through some abandon lots near train tracks to find a body, slumped on the ground, gunshot wound now surrounded by dried, brown blood. From down the way they get yelled at by one of the bullies to leave the body alone. Seemingly unaffected, the boys continue on their way home.

Finally, I omitted the last name of my friend Kurt while doing the final edits of this story for his privacy. I used his first name only because those closest to me will

no doubt recognize who he is and as such hiding that fact seems redundant and stupid. However, because this story is being made public, somewhat anonymously, I chose to protect his identity. Having not spoken to him in over 15 years and only knowing very little about who he is, I am sure he and his family would prefer anonymity, distance and dissociation from myself and this story. I ask any curious reader to respect that privacy. I ask our mutual friends the same.

Thank You,

Erik Gamlem
October 28th, 2013

KORRUPT yr self issue #7

Winter 2013/2014
thanks for reading

